



## Time Team assists Appleby Archaeology Group to excavate Appleby Jail

As most members will know, October was unexpectedly enlivened by an encounter with Channel 4's Time Team. Baldric and company were bent on uncovering some of the history of the old jail behind Appleby's Shire Hall and invited Appleby Archaeology Group to help.

The request came completely out of the blue and at very short notice. The Group was basically asked if it would like to help wash pots - but there were also vague suggestions that burly young members (who they?) might help with the digging if they chose. The response when Phyllis rang round was almost overwhelming - almost everybody who could be contacted wanted to come, though quite sensibly not many were prepared to commit themselves to anything very strenuous. Few people had any idea that the jail even existed behind the Shire Hall. Even fewer had any idea of the associated legends of grisly executions, treadmill sessions, and attempted escapes.

As it turned out, opportunities for practical assistance were generally quite limited anyway, but everybody who turned up

was guaranteed entertainment. All the stars were there for a start- Tony Robinson himself, of course, Phil with the funny hat and Carenza with her new baby. There was also a chance to see a whole array of sparkling technology in action - "ground penetrating radar", for example, and high precision GPS equipment capable of positioning objects in three dimensions to an accuracy of half a centimeter. But even better was the spectacle of the 50-strong production crew in full flow, moulding the story-line as they went along and pushing the excavation along at break-neck speed.

The production occupied three days from Wed 9<sup>th</sup> Oct to Fri 11<sup>th</sup>. It was late Wednesday afternoon before the first trenches appeared so that day was spent mainly soaking up the atmosphere and trying to get our photographs taken alongside somebody famous. By Thursday, however, the car park was beginning to look like a battlefield and bits of "pot" (mainly broken drainpipe) needed washing. Some of us even managed to get our trowels dirty and contributed to the discovery of the star find of the day - an old

boot (date and provenance technically unknown but promptly translated by Time Team into the discarded footwear of an escaping prisoner). By Friday it was impossible to move in the car park due to the press of bodies and the accumulation of spoil. It had started to rain, anyway, and we'd all got enough photographs so it was obviously time to leave things to the experts.

A huge number of people visited the site during the three days including many school-children who were greeted by the burly figure of one of the community policemen dressed in Eighteenth Century prison-warders uniform. It can only be hoped that the publicity will be a welcome boost to the civic groups bent on preserving the Shire Hall. We all look forward eagerly to the broadcasting of the Appleby episode of Time Team next Spring

Martin Joyce



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# The Romans in Cumbria

With David Shotter

David Shotter of Lancaster University had a very attentive audience when he spoke to the Group on the Romans in Cumbria. From the vast amount of information that could be covered he selected as his theme the frontier and its hinterland. The talk was illustrated by slides and made more intriguing by Dr Shotter's knowledge of recent finds and current thinking. He stressed that we were now closer to the people than we were with much personal detail coming from such artefacts as the writing tablets found at Vindolanda.

It is difficult to do full justice to the detail that Dr Shotter gave us but I have tried to summarise the main areas.

In AD 70 Vespasian became emperor. He was not an aristocrat but had won the right to rule from his success in war, and he had a point to prove. He saw that as the conquest of the north, Scotland and Ireland to form a Northern Province. Tacitus gives much of the credit to Agricola but as Dr Shotter reminded us Agricola was Tacitus' father-in-law!

The advances northwards came from two directions the earlier advance was from York across the Pennines followed by an advance from Chester across the Lancashire plain to the Lune and Eden Valleys. They linked at Brougham, an important and wealthy place at the time, and then moved north to Carlisle. Marching forts at Tebay and at Rey Cross are evidence of these approaches. Timbers found at Carlisle have been dated as being felled in the autumn of 79 and tie in with its conquest by Petilius Cerealis and the subsequent building of a timber fort.

Vespasian's dream died with him in 79. There were advances after this into Scotland but by the late 80s the Romans had withdrawn and established a frontier of a palisade and ditch along the road from Corbridge to Carlisle known as the Stanegate. There

were large forts along its length including one at Vindolanda. Later the forts were reduced in size and fortlets and watch towers built. The frontier was extended westwards to Kirkbride and eastwards to South Shields.

Frontier life was not without its comforts. Tablets record that seventeen men came from Carlisle to build baths at Vindolanda in 100.

Beyond the frontier the hinterland developed as the Romans consolidated their hold on the area. To the south a network of roads was constructed and forts were built including Ravenglass, one of the last to be built, and Hardnott. The fort at Ambleside had a large civilian settlement and nearby a massive storage area where goods, perhaps brought by water, were stored before being moved on.

By the second decade of the second century there was unrest, the trouble makers were probably the Novantae from the north west. A tomb stone of some one killed in the wars of 118 was found at Vindolanda and coins dated to 119 indicate a Roman victory.

Hadrian, the then emperor, decided to build a frontier from the Tyne to the Solway, initially of turf at the western end and stone at the eastern end. Hadrian wanted a symbol of the Roman Empire and a monument to himself and ordered a stone wall throughout, the only stone wall frontier in the Empire. What would he have made of it being a World Heritage Site? An excavation at Byker in 1997 found 3 rows of post holes between the wall and the ditch, and it is thought this might be the Roman equivalent of barbed wire with the space between the posts was filled with thorny materials such as bramble. Will this be found all along the wall? The last act in building was to replace the turf wall and by 138, the end of Hadrian's reign, that had been achieved. The wall did not stop people crossing but did ensure that they were supervised so that no undesirables could get across and

those who did could be taxed. The money taken was ring fenced and used for the purchase of land for demobilised soldiers, the milecastles acting as fortified gateways.

A system of fortlets and watch towers extended the defences along the coast beyond Bowness-on-Solway at least as far as Cardurnock. Ariel photographs show a number of linear features which suggest that the coastal fortifications were linked by roads ditches and a palisade to protect the coast and the good agricultural land in the vicinity.

Roman policy was to devolve the provincial administration as soon as possible to loyal locals. The main centre of government administered by the local tribe, the Carvetii, was at Carlisle. Over time a Romano-British culture developed and by the 4th century there are signs that the commanding officers' houses at the forts became the places where local administrators held court. As the central administration from Rome broke down these local administrators became "warlords" exacting taxes and protecting the local farmers in exchange for their defence against those who were beginning to invade Britain.

Dr Shotter concluded by saying that the area was probably more densely populated before and during the Romano-British period than had previously been thought. He gave as evidence the number of Romano-British settlements that could be identified above Kirby Lonsdale, and the settlements at Ewe Close and on Stainmore.

Phyllis Rouston





# LEAD MINING IN THE NORTH PENNINES

With John Wilson

The Autumn series of talks started on Tuesday the 8th of October when John Wilson gave an interesting and informative talk on lead mining in the North Pennines. More members were present and enjoyed the comfort of the new venue of the Supper Room, Market Hall, Appleby.

John Wilson spoke on three aspects of lead mining: how lead mining was organised, the processes of obtaining lead and the lives of the miners.

Two companies, The London Lead Company and W B Lead were responsible for most of the mining in the North Pennines in the 18th and 19th century. The industry collapsed in the 1870s when cheaper imports and the loss of exports brought a fall in prices.

There is evidence of that the Elizabethans had mined, digging surface pits and flushing out the ore with water leaving scars of hushes visible on the hillsides. It has not yet been proved that the Romans mined in the North Pennines.

John explained that minerals are found in the rocks of the North Pennines as veins which occur in vertical planes. Minerals found include lead ore (galena), silica, barites and quartz. The lead veins run in a north east south west direction and as they run parallel to one another one tunnel or level can pass through several veins. The lead industry involves four processes: mining, ore separa-

tion, smelting and production of lead for use. He described the first two in some detail.

The miners drove a tunnel through the veins and where the ground was unstable the tunnels were lined with stone as stone was more available and cheaper than wood. The dry stone walls allowed for drainage of water. Corbelled arches are evident, built from the debris of tunnelling. Tunnelling was done by two men working together hammering and chiselling away to make holes to put black powder in, dynamite was used laterally. The main problems were too much water and too little air. The gradient would allow water to flow out but if below the drainage level water had to be pumped out. Conditions were very dusty and the miners suffered from black spit within three years of going down the mine and had a life expectancy of not more than 45 years. They wore wooden clogs which led to foot rot and gangrene. As miners had to buy their own candles they used them economically and would walk to and from the mine face without a light using sticks to tap their way in the darkness. Artefacts that have been found included candles and clay pipes.

They started work on the surface at 9 years and went down the mine at 17. The youngsters dressed the ore, about 12% of which was galena. Dressing the minerals involved separating out the lead ore from the

rocks. Boys worked in pairs dressing up to 30 tons in a 13 hour day. It was sorted manually broken down to remove the waste and the galena separated out by washing and sieving.

John referred in particular to Killhope and showed slides of the surrounding landscape which demonstrated a wealth of industrial archaeology and the impact upon the environment of mining. In the first half of the 20th century Killhope became derelict. In 1980 restoration started and in 1985 an archaeological excavation took place but we were told much remains to be excavated. The landscape in the area shows not only the physical remains of mining such as derelict buildings, but also the changes in farmsteads and villages.

Miners were encouraged to have a smallholding and needed time off for harvesting and to collect peat. The small holdings utilised land in the vicinity of the mines and as a consequence any existing hamlets increased their size. W B Lead built schools as it required the boys to read and write and the influence of John Wesley in the late 18th century resulted in the building of chapels. Many of these buildings are features of today's landscape.

A number of questions were asked before John Wilson was thanked for giving such a good insight to the lives of the lead miners and the industrial past of the North Pennines.

Phyllis Rouston

# WINTER EVENTS

## AGM 2003

**And MEMBER'S EVENING**  
Tuesday 14th Jan 2003 7.00pm  
Appleby Market Hall

The Fifth AGM of the group will take place in the Supper Room upstairs in the Market Hall at 7.00pm. Please read the minutes of the last AGM before the meeting (included with this newsletter) and come with any comments or suggestions.

This will be followed at 7.30 by a talk by one of our members:

## ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT SHETLAND

**With Tricia Crompton**

Tricia will be introducing the excavations at Shetland and the environmental work that she has done on a Medieval Crofthouse.

Non-members are welcome to come to any Appleby Archaeology group talk.  
Entrance Fee £1.50

## TIME TEAM IN APPLEBY:

### The Inside Story

Tuesday 4th Feb 2003 7.30pm  
Appleby Market Hall

The Appleby Police invited Time Team to Appleby to locate and investigate the jail there. Tonight they will be telling us how it came about and showing

## EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN CUMBRIA

**With John Todd**

Tuesday 11th Mar 2002 7.30pm  
Appleby Market Hall

John Todd will be explaining the evidence for early Christianity in Cumbria including historical and archaeological sources.



Martin Joyce  
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